

THIS CHRISTMAS WILL SEE MILLIONS WHO ARE HUNGRY, homeless or without freedom. Others will be showered with gifts while their hearts stay empty and their fears unanswered. Are these contradictions not a sign that our values are distorted? With the child in Bethlehem was born a flame of hope, which God calls us to fan into a mighty blaze. Will we accept the task of bringing this hope to all who suffer in body or spirit?

Our days together will be a time of searching, and of listening to each other.

It will be a search for a fresh way of living, for God's will in personal and world affairs.

A search, too, for what we are meant to undertake as families, as countries and as a European continent. »

From the invitation to the New Year gathering at Caux, Switzerland, which will be from 26 December 1978 to 3 January 1979.

Conferences will also take place in December in Hammanskraal, South Africa, and in Perth, Australia, in January.

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No redundancy

John Houlder, Chairman of Houlder Off-shore Ltd, has a surprising attitude to redundancy. 'There should be none,' he says bluntly. 'Management should usually be able to foresee the shape of things to come and develop other activities for those whose jobs have become redundant.'

Recently Kim Beazley told about him in his fortnightly column in the 'Sydney Morning Herald':

IN BRITAIN I encountered a striking example of caring—an employer named John Houlder. He made a steel-determined resolution that, come what may, he would create another job for any man he employed who became redundant.

Houlder is, among other things, a designer of ships and oil rigs. He sat down with the leaders of trade unions involved in Britain's North Sea oil ventures.

With their advice about safety and living conditions, he designed the only oil rig

which operated in the North Sea without interruption throughout last winter—a superb piece of design.

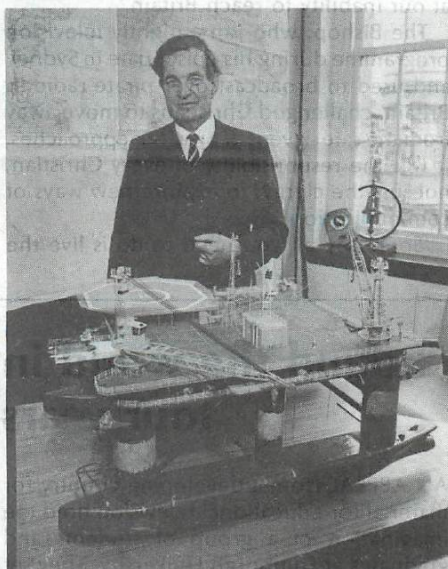
When a section of his clerical staff was threatened with redundancy, he assembled them and discussed with them his willingness to give them the training and the capital to start a travel agency—a business into which he had not previously ventured.

It is a success and they are all employed.

He flies a private aeroplane and for years he paid landing dues at airports. When mechanics from another of his businesses were threatened with unemployment, he bought an old RAF air base, reconditioned and modernised it, and has made it available as a commercial venture for other owners of private aircraft.

It is in great use and his mechanics are employed full time on maintenance.

If one sits down to talk to him, as I did, one encounters a commitment to use high managerial skills, inspiration which comes from his caring, and brilliant business acumen deliberately to maintain employment.



John Houlder in his office with a model of his company's unique dynamically positioned subsea construction barge. A still from the MRA film, *Britain Works* — OK.

Hopeless no longer

THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER at the Christian Responsibility in Public Affairs Lunch in London was Geoffrey Lean, author of *Rich World, Poor World*. Last month the speaker was Sir Charles Curran, former Director-General of the BBC.

Speaking on the theme of his book, Lean pointed out the challenge presented to Christians by a world where 28 children die of malnutrition every minute. 'Will we accept a passive faith that brings us personal peace,' he asked, 'or is our faith a dynamic revolutionary force which impels us to tackle such issues?'

Lean told how through researching the book he had abandoned the conviction that doom was inevitable in a world faced with wide-spread starvation, pollution and energy shortage. 'The crisis is enormously serious,' he said. 'But there are workable solutions, which require change in structures and attitudes and a new way of looking at problems. I find this a greater personal

challenge than the doom view—for if there is nothing we can do, we might just as well sit back and let disaster happen.'

Increased food production would not end hunger by itself, he continued. Usually the poor starved not because there was no food available, but because they could not afford to buy it, even at subsidised rates. The task facing the world was the elimination of poverty—of the gap between rich and poor nations and between rich and poor within nations.

Earlier in the week 150 came to hear Lean speak at St Edmund's Hall, Oxford.

Rich World, Poor World was reviewed nationally in *The Tribune*, *New Society* (Vol 26 nos 47 and 51). Regional papers wrote of the book, 'a series of broadsides' (*Yorkshire Post*), 'lucid and eminently readable...conveys a sense of realism and optimism' (*Oxford Mail*), 'a series of ingenious solutions...particularly in the energy field' (*Wigan Evening Post and Chronicle*), and 'a story of survival' (*Doncaster Evening Post*). 'The book satisfies the reader that the world's most destitute people are its greatest untapped resource,' says the *Yorkshire Evening Post*.

The book was reviewed in *The Scotsman*

under the headline 'Prophets of hope', while the *Dublin Evening Press* writes, 'One can only hope that the people in the places and positions to take positive action have considered the alternatives so starkly spelled out in this hard-hitting book.'

'*Rich World, Poor World*' is available from Grosvenor Books, 54 Lyford Rd, London SW18 3JJ. Hardback £7.95, paperback £4.50, p&p 60p.

Christmas gift

AT PAST CHRISTMASSES many readers have given 'New World News' subscriptions to their friends. To help those who would like to do so this year we have produced an attractive new subscription form.

Subscription rates in various currencies are given at the foot of the back page of NWN. Introductory subscriptions (12 issues) are one quarter of the annual rates shown. With the first copy of each subscription, we will enclose a note saying it comes as a gift from the donor.

Out of the nightmare onto the stage

CHRISTIANS must make themselves heard through the media, said the former Bishop of Sydney in London this month. The Rt Rev AW Goodwin Hudson was speaking at the Westminster Theatre of his 'nightmare' of trying to reach those who no longer go to church.

'We must communicate or else our generation will perish,' said the Bishop. 'I have regarded the Church universal as something like Little Bo-Peep, who lost her sheep. The real tragedy is that she didn't know where to find them. It is a nightmare to me how to contact the uncontactable. My heart aches at our inability to reach Britain.'

The Bishop, who ran a nightly television programme during his episcopate in Sydney and used to broadcast over pirate radio in Britain, challenged Christians to move away from the safe havens of previous approaches. It was the responsibility of every Christian, not just the clergy, to explore new ways of communication.

'Some say all you need to do is live the

good life and do a good turn when you can,' he continued. 'But that is the fruit not the root of our responsibility. We have to witness not only by life but by lip. I don't think they crucified Jesus for healing the sick, or feeding the people with bread and fishes, but because of His message.'

Bishop Goodwin Hudson was speaking before a performance of *Love All* at the Westminster Theatre. A report of the Bishop's speech in the *Church of England Newspaper* said, 'Speaking of that theatre's work to present Christian truth through the professional West End stage he said, "Wherever I have been in the world, I have not found the equivalent to this theatre. I am baffled that the Church at large does not support this kind of theatre more than it does. I hope there will be a new era of this kind of adventure in communication."'

This week we print reports of such adventures in communication—through theatre and films, professional and amateur—from all over Britain and other parts of the world.

North Sea Hardie

'A BRILLIANT PORTRAYAL,' wrote the *Evening Express* of the recent play-reading of *Keir Hardie—The Man They Could Not Buy* in the Aberdeen Arts Centre; 'Author Henry Macnicol has chosen to emphasise Keir Hardie as a Christian rather than any political angles.' And the *Press and Journal* reported, 'Play on Hardie well received in Peterhead' of the previous night's performance.

Leading citizens of these two oil and fishing centres in North-East Scotland invited the cast, who came from all over the country, to present the play about the great labour pioneer. Several stayed as the guests of the owner of the Peterhead Hotel, an engineering employer active in the town's new oil-related industries.

George Whyte, a senior Labour City

New Zealand rides

'RIDE! RIDE!', Alan Thornhill and Penelope Thwaites' musical about John Wesley, was produced in Auckland last month. The *New Zealand Herald*—which has the biggest circulation of all the country's daily newspapers—reviewed it under the headline 'Wesley story is splendid theatre'.

'Set aside any misgivings that this may be a didactic or sermonising play,' the reviewer writes. 'It is above all splendid theatre, produced with inspiration by Brian O'Connor, acted with sincerity and very convincingly by a dedicated and able cast.'

'Any theatregoer can take it as simply that, or, if he has ears to hear, he can absorb teaching as valid as 200 years earlier.'

A correspondent writes to us, 'I cannot remember the last time I was so moved by a play. The music and acting, humour and pathos, costumes and sets, proclaimed the basic moral and spiritual truths that enabled John Wesley in his day to change the heartlessness and selfishness, misery and despair of society and to save England from violent revolution.'

Round the world in four years

AN APPEAL from a developing country for material for educational television fired the imagination of a group of students and graduates at Edinburgh University. They set to work to make a film, telling the true story of two students' search for a purpose in life.

In the last four years since it was released, the film *What Are You Living For?* has been shown in schools and universities all over the world. A report from Brisbane, Australia, tells of 11 showings for high school children recently. Annette Hellekant from Sweden, who with Australian and Papua New Guinean friends organised the occasions, writes:

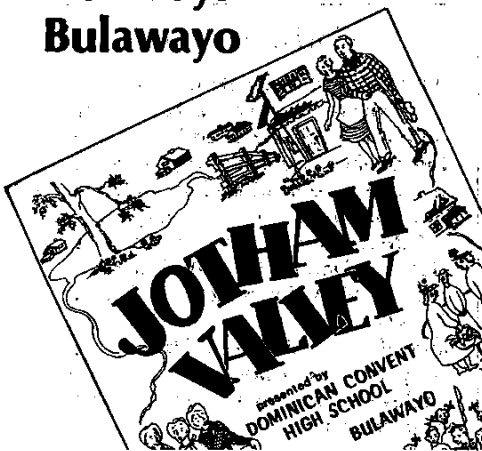
'Many of the students we met after the

film shows had family problems on their minds. One girl had tears in her eyes when I told her about the trust and honesty that had grown between me and my parents. At another school a girl asked, "Did you ever feel that you didn't want Jesus to run your life because you were young and wanted to enjoy it?" I told her that I had felt like this once, but I had found that life with God was more fun and satisfying.

'For each showing I had to ask for God's help to forget myself and think of the students. Several of them got the point that if you want to see anything different you have to start with yourself. They decided to give their lives to Jesus, to seek His guidance every morning, as well as pray.'

WHAT ARE YOU LIVING FOR? 16mm colour film, 19 minutes. Available from MRA Productions, 12 Palace Street, London SW1E5JF. Price £100 or on hire from local agents.

Cowboys in Bulawayo



WHEN A MULTIRACIAL girls' school in Bulawayo, Rhodesia, produced the MRA musical *Jotham Valley*, it gave both parents and pupils something to think about.

The play tells the true story of a feud over water rights in American cowboy country, and of the reconciliation between two brothers which solved it. Some parents attended all three performances—'It's as up to date as 20 minutes ago,' said one.

'The play made me feel much closer to girls in the school I had not even spoken to,' said Nicola, who played one of the brothers. 'It is trying to put across the fact that selfishness is the main problem of the world today. People are so concerned with their own hate, bitterness or hurt, they are unwilling to see the other side of the story.'

For Lynette, who played the part of

Spindle, the cowhand responsible for reconciling the brothers, the part came as a personal challenge. 'I have not been completely honest with my mother,' she said. 'In the play one of the brothers says to the other, "Spindle told me a few things he wasn't proud of." Just acting Spindle and hearing that sentence made me think what our relationship should be. I intend to put things right with her.'

'I enjoyed playing a reconciler because that's the part I'd like to play in life,' she continued. 'My aim is to make the school something for Rhodesia and the world to see. If we could work here in harmony I don't see why the rest of the world can't.'

The play was directed by Dorothy Hall, who teaches music at the school.

BJG and JEE

Councillor, introduced the performance in Aberdeen, and in Peterhead Patrick Wolrige Gordon, who was for 16 years Conservative MP for the area, spoke before the play.

Officials of the Trawl Officers', Seamen's, Sheet Metal Workers' and Post Office Workers' Unions were amongst the many labour representatives in the audiences. Men from the management of the fishing and oil-servicing industries and port authorities, joined them in long talks with the cast after the performances. A young socialist said as he gave a contribution towards the cast's expenses, 'This is the best thing I have seen. It expresses what I have been looking for all my life.'

Over 60 Church ministers in and around Aberdeen received a letter recommending the play, signed by four elders of the Church of Scotland. One minister, almost the last to leave the theatre, said, 'I hope you bring back more plays like this. I shall certainly support them.' **AJDC**

Answering flash



Students discuss after the play

ENGLISH STUDENTS were outnumbered two to one by 'new British' at Croydon Technical College last week when the MRA play, *Flashpoint*, was presented there.

Croydon has its race problems. The *Croydon Advertiser* recently reported that its 'strife-torn' Community Relations Council had asked for a probe into its affairs.

Flashpoint is set in a multiracial school. It looks squarely at the issues facing Britain today and suggests the basis of an answer.

The play was invited by the College's Students' Union, who helped with the costs of production. Ray Taylor, its President, said,

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Columba's footsteps

1,400 YEARS AGO St Columba landed on the Mull of Kintyre with 12 monks. It was a bold attempt to convert the wild and pagan Pictish tribes who inhabited most of what is now Scotland. Within two years a thriving agricultural community had been established on Iona; within five years they had won the friendship and support of the High King of the Picts at Inverness; within a hundred the inspiration of Iona was reaching the farthest corners of the British Isles.

This month the Adamnan Players followed in the footsteps of Columba and performed the story of his life in many of the places he had known and loved. It was a moving experience to stand where the monks landed and look across wild seas to the Irish coast, from which their frail little boat set out. We marvelled at the courage and vision of those brave men to whom we owe so much of our faith and civilisation.

Columba ran for five days at the Netherbow, the Church of Scotland Arts Centre, from 23 October—once again to full houses. The Netherbow has become *Columba's* home base. From there we launched on an experimental tour in Argyll.

Eight performances in eight days were planned in five different venues—with one technician and a largely inexperienced company. Most of us had never worked so hard in our lives—setting up all day, performing and then striking the set at night. We were overwhelmed by the generosity of the local communities who fed and housed us. Everyone helped—from the Catholic priest to the Church of Scotland minister, and from the kipper-curer, said to produce the best kippers in Britain, to a trainee solicitor. Four of the company barely made it in time for a school performance scheduled at 9.30 am; they had to cross from the home of a boat-builder on an island off Oban—in a gale.

The response was wholehearted—from rowdy schoolchildren who cheered and stamped to clergy of every denomination who begged us to come back. We drove through dramatically beautiful scenery in sun, hail and floods. Myriad technical complications were sorted out. Our technician put it down to a series of minor miracles.

Prayer was an integral and essential part of our life together. We were conscious not



A scene from *Columba*.

only of putting across the message of St Columba through the play, but also of a deepening of our own faith, individually and collectively. As a member of one audience put it: 'It was an experience shared.' We returned exhausted—and convinced that this is only a beginning. St Columba's message is as relevant today as it was when he landed at Southend. After this trial run in Columba's own country, we now plan to gather a more permanent group of Adamnan Players, so that we can respond in the spring to the invitations and requests for the play that have already arrived.

JOANNA SCIORTINO

STAN SMITH, 1972 Wimbledon champion, spoke with HW 'Bunny' Austin at a lunch for 150 people at the Westminster Theatre last week. Both are committee members of the Phyllis Konstam Memorial Fund, named in memory of Austin's actress wife, which aims to help fund Christian TV and stage productions.

'Theatre can be tremendously entertaining,' said Stan Smith, 'but it can also support many ideals that we need. Through this fund we are trying to provide the ideas that may save people individually and internationally.'

Stan Smith and Bunny Austin



Conscience of the world

TO PRESENT AN ASSESSMENT of Frank Buchman and his work in 45 minutes is a daunting task. BBC Radio 4, nationwide, made an honest attempt at it last week in a programme entitled 'Frank Buchman: Conscience of the world', a phrase taken from the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung's* editorial on Buchman's eightieth birthday.

The programme charted Buchman's life, sometimes in his recorded words—as when he describes the experience of the Cross of Christ in Keswick which was the foundation of his work—and sometimes through the reminiscences of people who knew him. The programme's presenter, the Rev Robert Foxcroft, began by bringing out Buchman's emphasis on Christ's absolute moral standards, on taking time in quiet to seek God's direction and on passing on to others one's own experience of Christ, drawing on the knowledge of Canon Julian Thornton-Duesbery.

The programme moved on to the growth of the Oxford Group in the 'thirties and its growing impact in Europe, which led to its condemnation by the Nazi General Ludendorff, and the Gestapo.

Collective leadership

Asked about the effect of Buchman's work, Garth Lean replied: 'Hundreds of thousands of people found new life, and out of them Buchman built a world force, a force with which he was never satisfied, as he was never satisfied with himself, but a force of people whom he tried to help to become totally dedicated so that Christ and His Kingdom became more important to them than any other thing or relationship.' Gordon Wise pointed to Buchman's part in reconciling France with Germany and Japan with her neighbours, for which he had been decorated by the countries concerned.

Buchman had died in 1961. What had

been the effect of his death? Robert Foxcroft asked Daniel Mottu of Switzerland. 'We have had to develop a collective leadership and to establish deeper links with each other. It has not been easy, but out of it has come something very strong.'

Lord Soper was quoted. 'Absolute standards. Rubbish,' he said. 'The moment you start talking in terms of absolute you have forsaken commonsense.' Aiming at absolute standards, Soper continued, 'sooner or later can only lead to disappointment—or knowing that at the end of every day the best thing you can do is to ask God to forgive you your sin because in this wicked world you are going to commit them.'

Nebulous view

Lord Hailsham, on the other hand, said that his friends in MRA had influenced him personally. 'They have made me realise—and in his respect have done me an immense amount of good—that wrong-doing, even on a small scale, cannot be set aside as trivial or unimportant, whether it is wrong-doing in the way of honesty or any other field of morality.'

'For me Buchman was not a charismatic figure like, for example, Billy Graham.' He had quite obviously caused Hailsham's old friend, Peter Howard, 'quite agonising experiences' which may or may not have been justified. One could not judge. He thought MRA was a force for good. They must not fortify their own quarter of the Celestial City and pretend they were in a war on their own. They were part of the religious movement in the world, and specifically of Christianity.

Lord Hailsham pointed out that MRA had been subjected to 'a good deal of calumny', and Robert Foxcroft referred to Tom Driberg's 'propaganda campaign' from 1928 onwards. 'More than any others providing more reasoned criticism, he formed public opinion,' said Foxcroft. 'So much so that, before I started researching for this programme, that was the sort of nebulous view I

held, that Moral Re-Armament was something rather creepy and unhealthy.'

The *Church Times*, in its review of the programme, also wrote of Driberg's 'fanatical opposition'. This opposition has been explained for many by Driberg's autobiography, *Ruling Passions*, published posthumously, in which he reveals himself (in Paul Johnson's phrase) as 'a homosexual philanderer of the most pertinacious and indefatigable kind, without the smallest scruple, utterly regardless of the feelings of or consequences to his partners', and as a card-carrying Communist till 1941. Thereafter, Chapman Pincher, reveals in his *Inside Story*, there were 'deep suspicions inside MI5 that he was an active agent of the KGB'.

Robert Foxcroft summed up the programme. 'Many people,' he said, 'regard the enthusiasts of MRA as pests constantly trying to win new converts. Others see them as good Church members.... In the end, the claims of the movement depend on God-control, particular guidance for daily life, to be tested against Scripture and by the absolutes of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. But the real snag is the impossibility of discerning whether a man is God-controlled or merely claiming divine authority for human design. In other ways the Oxford Group and Moral Re-Armament have blazed a trail for the churches to follow—the use of personal conversion, the use of small groups, commitment to faith. These are now readily accepted in mainstream Christianity.'

Accomplishments

The *Church Times* reviewer called the programme 'fair and informative' with the one fault that 'too little was made of the movement's accomplishments'.

'Perhaps they are of a nature that would make it difficult to present them as facts, figures or complimentary interviews in a radio feature,' he went on. 'The subject, after all, was Frank Buchman.'

Might the BBC now do a programme on the current action of MRA?

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'Some people use racial issues to further their aims. I'd like them to see this play. If you put it on in another London college, I'll get some of my friends in the Union to see it.' Since then the play has been invited to another London college.

The evening was the initiative of two Sikh sisters, Deepa and Jyoti Nagi, both students at the college. They saw *Flashpoint* in Tirley Garth, the MRA centre in the North of England. Both decided that this was exactly what was needed to bring racial understanding in their community.

They went to see the Students' Union President about putting it on. 'We saw all

sorts of difficulties ahead,' said Jyoti. 'The college regulations forbade the opening of a lecture theatre on a Friday evening. We went to the Vice-Principal and the Bursar. We didn't know how to ask them but we took time in quiet before seeing them, and got some ideas, and finally they agreed to keep the college open till the end of the play.'

Strengthened

Jyoti spoke to the 150 students before the show. 'Although I am a foreigner I want to put as much as I can into this country,' she said, 'and not to think of Britain as being alien.'

Afterwards most of the students stayed

talking with the cast. A 17-year-old Irish girl said, 'This has changed my views about life.' She bought a copy of the script to study it. An Indian girl said, 'I only wish our sociology teacher had been here. These are the issues we deal with, acted out.'

When the college closed, a dozen students continued their discussion until 11.30 in a restaurant. An engineering student from Zambia said, 'This play has changed my attitude.'

'At home we used to argue,' says Deepa Nagi. 'I used to shout at Jyoti. Listening to the inner voice has helped us to work together. And taking on a big task has helped us to get to know each other. My faith in God has been strengthened.' **GENIS IBOT**